

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03

NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 DHA-02

CU-04 ORM-02 /096 W

-----020249Z 030418 /70

R 011105Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 4714

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK TH

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PK

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT OMAN

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IN

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN

AMEMBASSY SEOUL KS

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE SN

AMEMBASSY MANILA RP

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 1179

DEPT PLEASE PASS DEPT OF LABOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : ELAB, SPOP, BA

SUBJECT : THE BAHRAIN LABOR FORCE: 1977

REFS : (A) 76 MANAMA 930 (NOTAL) (B) 76 MANAMA 032 (NOTAL)

1. ACCORDING TO FIGURES SUPPLIED BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOR
AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND CROSSCHECKED WITH MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
STATISTICS ON PERSONS PASSING THROUGH BAHRAIN AND THOSE
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ISSUED RESIDENT PERMITS, THE FOLLOWING SKETCH OF THE
LABOR FORCE OF BAHRAIN EMERGES.

2. THE POPULATION OF BAHRAIN, INCLUDING EXPATRIATES OF ALL
NATIONALITIES, IS APPROXIMATELY 305,000 (IN CONTRAST TO
211,000 IN THE LAST FORMAL CENSUS WHICH WAS TAKEN IN 1971).
THE WORKFORCE IS ABOUT 105,000 AS OF EARLY 1977, COMPOSED

ROUGHLY OF 45,000 BAHRAINIS AND 60,000 'EXPATRIATES' (THIS CONTRASTS WITH 38,000 BAHRAINIS AND 23,000 EXPATRIATES IN 1971).

3. THE EXPATRIATE WORKFORCE IS COMPOSED OF THE FOLLOWING MAJOR NATIONALITY GROUPINGS: (A) INDIAN: 25,000; (B) PAKISTANI: 22,000; (C) BRITISH: 2800; (D) KOREAN: 2600; (E) OTHER EUROPEAN, INCLUDING USA: 2000; (F) OTHER ASIAN, IMPORTANTLY INCLUDING THAILAND, PHILLIPINES AND SINGAPORE: 1500. IN ADDITION THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 3000 'OTHER ARABS', INCLUDING EGYPTIAN, YEMENIS AND OMANIS. AND, FINALLY, THERE ARE ABOUT 2000 WORKERS OF IRANIAN ORIGIN IN BAHRAIN WHO ARE OFFICIALLY 'STATELESS', HOLDING NEITHER IRANIAN NOR BAHRAINI TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.

4. AFTER LARGE INCREASES IN 1975 AND EARLY 1976, THE LABOR FORCE REMAINS ABOUT THE SAME SIZE AS REPORTED REFEELS. GENERALIZATIONS REGARDING WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS ARE DIFFICULT AS THEY VARY ENORMOUSLY BETWEEN 'EXPATRIATE' GROUPS. NEVERTHELESS, GENERALLY SPEAKING, HIGH-PAYING MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL JOBS ARE HELD BY EUROPEANS AND A RELATIVELY FEW INDIANS AND PAKISTANIS. LIFESTYLES VARY FROM THE AFFLUENT VILLA LIVING OF MOST EUROPEANS TO THE OVERCROWDED BUT NOT POVERTY-STRICKEN EXISTENCES OF PAKISTANI, INDIAN AND OMANI LABORERS. BAHRAINIS CONTINUE TO DOMINATE IN THE SKILLED ARTISAN JOB CATEGORIES (WELDERS, FABRICATORS, ETC.) AND CONSTITUTE THE NEAR TOTALITY OF THE WORKFORCE IN THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS OF BAHRAIN, I.E., THE OIL COMPANY AND THE ALUMINUM SMELTER. FOREIGN CONSTRUCTION UNCLASSIFIED

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FIRMS WHICH ARE OIL-RELATED, SUCH AS BROWN AND ROOT OF TEXAS, EMPLOY ROUGHLY HALF BAHRAINI/HALF ASIAN WORKFORCES. SPECIFIC CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS, AS WITH THE IMPORTANT OAPEC-FINANCED DRYDOCK, ARE BEING COMPLETED BY SPECIALLY IMPORTED WORK FORCES, IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, KOREAN.

A5. A SECTORAL ANALYSIS OF THE BAHRAINI ECONOMY, DONE BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, REVEALED SOME INTERESTING FACTS. BAHRAINIS PREDOMINATE IN FISHING, AGRICULTURE, TRANSPORT, STORAGE COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES. EXPATRIATES FORM THE MAJORITIES IN PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING INDUSTRIES, BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION, RESTAURANT AND HOTEL SERVICES. IN OTHER SECTORS STUDIES (ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER, FINANCE, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND OTHER BUSINESS SERVICES) THE WORKFORCE IS APPROXIMATELY HALF AND HALF, BAHRAINI, NON-BAHRAINI.

6. COMMENT: AS WE HAVE NOTED IN EARLIER REPORTS, BAHRAINIS ON THE WHOLE REMAIN RELAXED AND ACCOMMODATING ABOUT THE LARGE NUMBERS OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN THEIR MIDST. IN GENERAL,

WE SEE THIS AS A COMBINATION OF THE TRADITIONAL TOLERANCE OF AN ENTREPOT ISLAND AND THE FACT THAT FEW OF THE EXPATRIATES DIRECTLY COMPETE WITH THE BAHRAINI WORKFORCE. WHEN SUCH COMPETITION ERUPTS (AS IT OCCASIONALLY DOES WITH WELDERS, PIPEFITTERS, FABRICATORS) TOLERANCE IS THROWN TO THE WIND AND THE BAHRAINIS REPAIR TO THE MINISTRY OF LABOR FOR MORE OR LESS FORCED PLACEMENT IN FOREIGN FIRMS.

7. THE CULTURAL IMPACT PROCEEDS APACE. A MAJORITY OF FILMS SHOWN IN BAHRAIN ARE OF INDIAN AND PAKISTANI ORIGIN; RESTAURANTS AND FOOD SPECIALTY SHOPS ARE INCREASINGLY SOUTH ASIAN REFLECTING THE FACT THAT THE EUROPEANS (AND AMERICANS) EAT IN THEIR HOMES OR IN THE FIRST CLASS HOTELS AND THE OTHER SIZEABLE FOREIGN WORKFORCES, EMPLOYED IN

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DEPT PLEASE PASS DEPT OF LABOR

GROUPS LIKE THE KOREANS, ARE CAERED TO ON HE WORKSITE.
THE PAKISTANIS AND INDIANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE GENERALLY
RECRUITED SINGLY AND MUST MANAGE THEIR OWN BOARD AND LODGING
ARRANGEMENTS. THIS LATTER REQUIREMENT OFTEN RESULTS IN
UNCREDIBLY OVERCROWDED AND UNHEALTHY LIVING CONDITIONS.
THE MINISTRY INFORMALLY ALLOWS AS TO HOW IT ESTIMATES
PAKISTANIS AND INDIANS, WHEN THEY ARE LIVING IN PROPER ROOMS,
PERSONS
AVERAGE 6 - 9/PER ROOM. THIS COMPARES WITH AN AVERAGE
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TWO TO THREE PER ROOM FOR A WORKING CLASS BAHRAINI FAMILY.

8. LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENCE OF A LARGE
FOREIGN WORKFORCE HAVE NOT BEEN FULLY THOUGHT THROUGH AS FAR
AS WE CAN TELL. FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REASONS, AS WELL
AS BECAUSE OF THE STRAINED INFRASTRUCTURE, WE UNDERSTAND
THE GOB HAS DECIDED NOT TO ALLOW FURTHER SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH
OF THE FOREIGN WORKFORCE FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. AS
MORE BAHRAINIS ENTER THE LABOR FORCE, AND THIS IS HAPPENING
RELATIVELY QUICKLY WITH THE MAJOR SOCIAL CHANGE INVOLVED
IN WOMEN WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME AS WELL AS WITH THE COMING
OF AGE OF THE VERY YOUNG BAHRAINI POPULATION (THE BIRTH
RATE, AMONGST BAHRAINIS, IS THOUGHT TO BE A VERY HIGH 3.5
PERCENT ANNUALLY), THE IDEA SEEMS TO BE TO SEND THE FOREIGN
WORKFORCE HOME. SOME, SUCH AS THE KOREANS AND OTHER EAST
ASIANS, WILL GO MORE THAN WILLINGLY ONCE WORK IS NOT
AVAILABLE. OTHERS, LIKE THE BRITISH IN TOP AND MIDDLE
MANAGEMENT POSITIONS AND THE INDIAN/PAKISTANIS IN LESS
SOUGHT AFTER POSITIONS WILL WANT TO STAY ON. FOR THEM LIFE
IN BAHRAIN, DESPITE THE HEAT AND RELATIVE CULTURAL ISOLATION,
IS STILL CONSIDERABLY MORE PLEASANT AND CERTAINLY MORE
REMUNERATIVE THAN IN THEIR RESPECTIVE HOME COUNTRIES.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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